



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of Wisconsin*

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NEWS SUMMARY:

On June 12, 2006, a former Menominee Casino employee was sentenced to federal prison for two counts of felony theft from the casino.

Dewey A. Thunder, Sr. (DOB: 01/01/1965), who had been an employee of the Menominee Casino, Bingo, Hotel on the Menominee Reservation, previously had entered guilty pleas to the two-count federal indictment. Thunder admitted that he stole money on two occasions while working at the Casino emptying a slot machine. The Casino is licensed for Class II gaming by the Menominee Tribal Gaming Commission which operates pursuant to an ordinance and resolution approved by the National Indian Gaming Commission. The Casino is located in the Eastern District of Wisconsin.

In a Victim Impact Statement submitted on behalf of the Casino for sentencing, Allen Ninham, an Investigator for the Casino, stated: "this was not just a theft from the Casino, but a theft from every enrolled Menominee person in the Menominee Tribe." On behalf of the Casino, he urged the court to impose prison time and order restitution so that a clear message would be sent to other employees of the Casino that stealing from the Casino would have serious consequences.

At the sentencing hearing on July 12, 2006, Mr. Thunder's attorney asked the Judge to place Mr. Thunder on probation instead of sending him to prison. The United States Attorney's Office recommended that the Court impose a term of imprisonment to reflect the seriousness of the offense and to afford adequate deterrence to similar criminal behavior.

In sentencing Thunder to prison, United States District Judge William Griesebach described the crime as a serious offense for which prison was warranted. The Judge agreed that Thunder in essence stole from his "family" because the money generated by the Casino is used to benefit the enrolled members of the Menominee Tribe. Mr. Thunder abused the position of trust

which he held at the Casino by the manner in which he stole the money. The Judge noted that Thunder knew which machine to take money from without being seen because of his job at the Casino. It was also noted that Thunder had a significant history of antisocial behavior. The Judge stated Thunder was not a young man who saw the money and acted impulsively. Instead, Thunder, who at the time was 39 years old, engaged in a well planned scheme to steal the money.

Judge Griesebach stated Thunder should have been a role model and leader for the younger employees instead of engaging in criminal acts. The Judge also noted that as a convicted felon Dewey Thunder, Sr. will no longer be allowed to hunt with a gun.

Thunder was sentenced to a term of imprisonment of two months in a federal prison. This term of imprisonment will be followed by two years of supervised release. Should Thunder violate the terms of his supervised release, he may be ordered to return to prison. Thunder was also ordered to pay restitution to the Casino for the money he stole.

The prosecution of this case was the result of a joint investigation by the Menominee Casino Security Director Wayne J. Higgins and Investigator Ninham, Menominee Tribal Police Investigator Scott Wouters and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Special Agent Pat Lynch from the Green Bay office. Assistant United States Attorney Penny Coblentz prosecuted this case.

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